

JAN 13 2000

MR. KAMPS: Hello. My name is Kevin Kamps. I work with Nuclear Information and Resource Service in Washington, D.C. We work with communities across the country who live near nuclear power plants or near radioactive waste dumps or proposed dumps. We're a clearinghouse for information, and we try to work with folks who are concerned about the dangers of nuclear power.

And the first thing I'd like to say is that I started timing the professor when he spoke halfway through his talk, and it was six minutes. And I'm concerned that it's not really fair. I think in the earlier session this morning too there were a handful of people who were cut off or told their time was off and others not, and I think there's a slight double standard going on with that.

MR. BROWN: Well, I'll just say that I'll be happy to compare notes with you. The professor went 11 minutes rather than 10. I did warn him. If you would like 11 minutes, I'll be happy to do that. I mean, I think we were pretty fair this morning. But please, I don't mean to interrupt. Go ahead.

MR. KAMPS: I've spoken -- this will be my fourth time that I've spoken. Las Vegas I spoke twice and here I've spoken twice as well. So I'm trying not to repeat myself for folks who come before.

Boy, where to start? I mean, that's part of the unfairness is that so much was said that it's hard to respond to any of it, so I guess I'll just stick to what I have to say.

1

[I wanted to address -- an idea came to me when asked if this document had been translated into Spanish. And a friend of mine in Chicago who is very concerned about the transportation of high-level wastes took it upon himself to bicycle the routes through Chicago that the State of Nevada identified as targeted transport routes. Most of those rail routes and highway routes travel through ground on the African American and Hispanic, Mexican American communities.

So I think it's fair to ask the Department of Energy to translate this document into Spanish and provide it to the Hispanic communities of Chicago and seek their input on this project, since Chicago is facing a large number, not as large as Utah, but a very large number of shipments. It's a major transport going through this. And I think that the comment deadline should be extended to allow them to make their comments. Most of them are citizens of this country, the vast majority are citizens, and they may not speak English. So that's a request of the Department of Energy.]

2

[In regards to the three additional hearings, it's another matter of public process. The Lincoln, Nebraska hearing is on the 24th of January. It was announced in the Federal Register on the 5th of January. That gives people there a few weeks, a short few weeks' notice to read this very long document, very technical document, and I think that the comment period should be extended to give them adequate time to make their comments.]

3

[Another thing I wanted to point out, it came from the question and answer period at the beginning of this session right here tonight. The question was asked, why is the Department of Energy changing its site selection guidelines, its site suitability guidelines at this time? And the question was not answered. It was deferred for future public hearings.

I just wanted to tell the members of the public here that this change in the guidelines, the Department of Energy guidelines, is quite significant because it's been found by the Department of Energy's own studies that water is moving at a much faster rate through Yucca Mountain than is previously believed. Chlorine-36 has been found in the depths of Yucca Mountain that could only have come from nuclear weapons testing in the South Pacific. So it fell as rainwater on Yucca Mountain and penetrated deep into Yucca Mountain in less than 50 years.

There's a current guideline on the books that if water moves more quickly in a thousand years through Yucca Mountain that it should be disqualified. So it's very significant that at this time the rules are being changed in the middle of the game.

In December of '98 over 200 environmental organizations in the United States and organizations overseas as well called upon the Department of Energy to disqualify the Yucca Mountain site because of this flow, this water flow disqualifying condition. The Department of Energy denied that petition. And now it's changing the rules which would do away with a disqualifying condition such as that.

So it's very significant, and each step of this is locking in Yucca Mountain as the repository. So if we defer these questions for the future, well, it may be too late.

4

The question of terrorism as a danger for these shipments, it's been said that these shipments are not. If you listen to the Department of Energy and as well to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, these shipments are very safe, nothing could ever go wrong with these shipments. But they contain some of the deadliest materials on earth. If they're breached and the materials are released into the environment, that is a catastrophe to that local environment. And it's very difficult to clean up radionuclides that get into the environment, and Chernobyl shows that. A huge percentage of the national budget of the countries over there is being devoted to Chernobyl cleanup. And right at the reactor itself, which was the showcase of the cleanup efforts, the readings are still very high right there. So it's very difficult to clean the stuff up once it gets out.

And it's interesting that we just had a court case in Kalamazoo where we were trying to get an injunction against a Department of Energy shipment of plutonium experimental fuel through Michigan, and we had a person who's worked for the State of Nevada who's done reports of danger of terrorism to high-level waste shipments, and he was one of the expert witnesses who testified that this plutonium shipment was a high-profile federal project, that there was concern, and that it hadn't been addressed by the Department of Energy in its environmental assessment for that project.

And one of the arguments that the U.S. attorneys representing the Department of Energy made was that this single shipment of plutonium was not equal to Yucca Mountain and all those shipments, so how could we ask the judge to put an injunction on this one shipment when Yucca Mountain just dwarfed it.

So I thought that was really interesting that that argument was floated. And I imagine they didn't think that anybody involved with Yucca Mountain would ever hear those words. So it was an admission that terrorism is a significant situation that wasn't addressed adequately at all in this document.

5

In terms of leaving it where it is, I'm from Michigan, I've only worked in Washington for a few months and I moved to Washington based on my experience, my experience in Michigan dealing with nuclear power and living downwind from the Palisades reactor and the Cook reactors. And it's interesting to mention that the Cook reactor, the two reactors there belong to American Electric Power, which is one of the companies that's in Private Fuel Storage. It's trying to bring their waste to Utah to dump them on Native American lands out here. And I didn't know that, and I've been involved for a long time.

So I'm going to take that information back to Michigan and share it with the local folks and see what they think about that, about the morality of dumping our wastes on Native American lands. And the same can be said of Yucca Mountain since, by the treaty of Ruby Valley of 1863, that's Western Shoshone land. They've never let go of the title to that place. And so it's a real pattern that Native Americans are being targeted for these dumps.

I did want to respond to another thing that the professor said just before me that in 40 years -- what was the number? -- a hundred million shipments of radioactive material and hazardous materials. Well, I know a lot of this discussion is about high-level waste, and I just wanted to mention, though, that just a couple weeks ago a low-level waste shipment in Ohio was involved in a head-on collision and there was a big fire involved. And I'll be interested to see what kind of releases were involved in that.

There's lots of accidents with nuclear materials being transported. There's a whole book, it's called the Greenpeace Book of the Nuclear Age. It's pretty thick, and it's 50 years of history of both nuclear weapons and nuclear power accidents, and I'd recommend it to people to check out. And I'd recommend, I've got all our handouts. We have a table full of handouts back there. It's hard to get things in even in five or eleven minutes, so I'd encourage people to check that out. There's a map with the Utah routes and projected numbers as well for those shipments coming through.

But in terms of leaving it where it is, I'm from out there and I don't think it's moral to dump it on other people's land when it's going to leak anyway. And I think we should find some real solutions. We shouldn't be moving this stuff if we don't know it's going to improve the situation, that's perhaps even going to make it worse. So I don't really know what the rush is all about. Since these materials are going to be deadly for a very long time, I don't know why we're rushing this process as we are.

And I just -- I wonder where Paul Revere is when we need him, we know. I think we need somebody to be just going around and warning people that this is on its way if people don't get involved. I think that we really need to spread the word around the country that what the nuclear industry has in mind, and I'm disappointed in the agencies that are involved in this, the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, because I see them many times serving the industry and not protecting the public, and for me that's becoming an ever more apparent pattern, and I think we need to do something about it.

The last thing I'll say, the professor said before, there's no alternatives than nuclear, you know, nuclear is forever. We have another handout, "Wind vs. Plutonium," and I had a discussion with one of the DOE folks during the break, and it came to my mind that to mention to them, you know, if wind power and some of these other alternatives had poured into them the billions, hundreds of billions of dollars that the nuclear power industry has received free of charge in taxpayers' money over the past you know, 50 years, where would we be at, you know? There's a lot of potential for safer renewable energy alternatives where we wouldn't need to sacrifice future generations or Native American lands, endanger our communities with shipments rolling through.

So yeah, I just -- I feel that there's been a lot of lies, there's a lot of lies going on, and I just encourage people to learn all they can and defend yourselves and defend your communities, because the government's not going to defend you. So thank you.